

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Use precise words to make writing clear and memorable

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 453
- **Practice Worksheets**, Levels A and B, pp. 454–455
- **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 456

You will also need:

- Transparency: **Teaching Model**, “King’s Castle”

Teach

1. **Using Precise Words:** Explain that words are a writer’s tools, and that the right tools will get the job done.
 - Have students brainstorm two lists of words. First, list vague or abstract words, such as *very, lots, go, stuff, move, slow, etc.* Then list **precise words**—words referring to a clear location, action, direction, or thing, such as *scissors, pencil, talk, laugh, school, sluggish, etc.* Finally, make a third list: “Even More Precise Words.” (Sample: *safety scissors, red pencil, gossip, cackle, Lincoln School, plodding, etc.*)
 - Explain that choosing the right words to say what you mean makes your writing vivid and helps you convey ideas and information clearly and memorably.
 - Tell students that precise words include specific nouns, lively verbs, and vivid adjectives and adverbs. Such language helps create the mood or convey the image the writer wants.
2. **Teaching Using Precise Words:** Distribute the **Lesson Summary**. Preview the **Academic Vocabulary**. Explain that words are a writer’s tools, and that the right tools are the most precise words. Guide students through the **Here’s How** steps, using the following sentence, copied on the board, as a model:

EXAMPLE The girl thought the long ceremony was really boring.

- Ask student volunteers to underline vague, general words in the sentence. (*girl, long, ceremony, really boring*)
- Have students eliminate and/or replace the general words with specific words. They may work with a partner to ask clarifying questions, such as “Who is the girl?” (*child, student, someone’s little sister*) “What sort of ceremony?” (*religious, civil, school*) “Why was the ceremony boring?” (*It was a 3-hour, tedious, repetitive, stuffy, whiny, monotone ceremony.*)
- Have students rewrite the sentence using a few choice words of precise language,
- Then ask volunteers to read their new, vividly memorable sentences to the class. (Sample: *Mercedes decided to leave the 3-hour long awards ceremony, in the middle of the stuffy repetitive speech.*)

USING PRECISE WORDS, CONTINUED

3. Guided Practice. Display the **Teaching Model**, “King’s Castle,” covering the revised version at the bottom. Use the **Lesson Summary** to guide students through reading and revising the model for precise language, as follows.

- Have students read the text and underline imprecise nouns, verbs, and modifiers. (*was, knock, door, opened, slowly, sound, room, man, funny, empty, time, moved*)
- Ask students to rewrite the passage using more precise words. You may want to use a chart such as the one below to help students brainstorm replacements for particular words.

Underlined words to evaluate . . .	Sample precise words
Verbs: <i>was (a knock)</i>	General: <i>was (a knock)</i> Specific: <i>echoed, reverberated, rang</i>
Nouns: <i>man</i>	General: <i>man</i> Specific: <i>prince, beggar, guard, soldier</i>
Adverbs (only use when necessary): <i>slowly</i>	General: <i>slowly</i> Specific: eliminate by using the more precise verb <i>creaked</i>
Adjectives (only use when necessary): <i>funny</i>	General: <i>funny</i> Specific: <i>royal purple</i>

- Have students choose the best words for the meaning and feeling they wish to convey and revise the passage accordingly.
- Put students into pairs and have students read each other’s writing and ask clarifying questions: *What sort of man? What sort of door and what sound does it make when it opens? Why are the clothes “funny”?*
- Have students revise their passage again, answering their partner’s questions.
- Uncover the rewritten version on the **Teaching Model**. Have students compare it with their version, explaining that there is no single “correct” version.

QUICK CHECK. Ask volunteers to rewrite the sentence using precise language.

EXAMPLE The snow fell slowly.

(Sample: *The gigantic slow flakes floated down like feathers after a pillow fight.*)

Practice and Apply

Practice activities on using precise words appear on pp. 454–455.

- Assign **Practice Worksheet A** to students who need more structured activities.
- Assign **Practice Worksheet B** to grade-level and above-level students.

USING PRECISE WORDS, CONTINUED

Answer Key: Practice Worksheet A

1. countless 2. entertaining 3. disgusting 4. like gossip on the internet 5. gear 6. informative 7. bedroom 8. roared 9. sparrows
10. gobbled

Sample Answers: Practice Worksheet B

1. door, hallway, dark, few, light, bones, man, moved, quickly, room
2. *The heavy iron door opened into a vast stone hallway. It was pitch-dark except for the weak light from three black candles nestled into cracks in the walls. From their strangled light, you could see piles of human bones along the walls. The young prince shivered and strode purposefully to the queen's parlor at the end of the hall.*

Assess and Reteach

Use these guidelines to determine if students need the **Reteaching Worksheet**.

- **Practice Worksheet A:** Students should answer at least 5 of the 10 items correctly.
- **Practice Worksheet B:** Students should underline at least 5 imprecise words and replace them with precise language. They should include a complete paragraph in item 2.

For students who need reteaching, review the **Student Lesson Summary**. Focus on the definition in **Academic Vocabulary** and then work through the **Here's How** steps using items 1 and 2 in **Practice Worksheet A**. Then have them complete the **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 456.

Answer Key: Reteaching Worksheet

1. b 2. a 3. b 4. slammed 5. the office door 6. bang
7. marched 8. purposefully 9. conference room 10. Sample rewrite: *The new boss slammed the office door with a bang and marched purposefully to the conference room.*